

Exchange With Reporters at the Demilitarized Zone July 11, 1993

North Korea

Q. How many more years do you think this line will hold?

The President. I don't know. I hope it won't be long. But in the meanwhile, I'm glad these people are here. All these young men are doing something very important. And when you see, as I said, when you see the way North Korea's been behaving, their presence here is even more important. The American people should be very proud of them. They are making a major contribution to the defense of freedom and also to the spread of freedom. And in the end our side of that bridge will prevail.

Q. Do you think they know you're here?

The President. I imagine they do. They were certainly looking. And someday they'll be able to—

Q. Menacingly?

The President. Well, I hope someday they'll just be able to walk on over here in peace.

Q. Knowing what you know now, do you think they're more likely or less likely, the North Koreans, to comply with the treaty?

The President. Well, I don't know. They've been rather calm in response to my trip here. And that is somewhat encouraging. But it doesn't make any sense. When you examine the nature of the American security commitment to Korea, to Japan, to this region, it is pointless for them to try to develop nuclear weapons because if they ever use them it would be the end of their country. All they have to do is read our security agreements.

So I hope that this trip will serve to get things back on track. And I hope they will com-

ply. The President of South Korea, President Kim, has laid out a long-term gradual way of reunification that is clearly in the interest of the people on both sides of this great divide. But we can't even resume that until they make it clear that they're going to stay in the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime, they're going to allow the inspectors back in, they're not going to try to become a nuclear power. That's the major issue for this day. And until that happens, we just need to redouble our resolve and make it clear where we are.

Q. Well, weren't they moving toward rapprochement, and all of a sudden something happened, they were really—

The President. They seemed to be. And, as I said, President Kim reached out to them. And it's clear that the people of South Korea would like reunification to be possible, if you can preserve democracy and freedom.

So we'll just have to see. The wisdom of what our country has done for 40 years is basically demonstrated by this abrupt change in North Korean policy. We know what works. If we just stay strong and we stay resolute and we stay firm, we know that will work. And eventually, we have to hope that they will take the sensible course and that we can then resume the thaw that was in place before this last unfortunate development.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:55 p.m. at the Bridge of No Return.

Remarks to the Troops at Camp Casey, South Korea July 11, 1993

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, General Abrams. Thank you, Sergeant Corley, for the tomahawk.

Audience members. Oooh.

The President. He looks to me like he could use it. [Laughter]

I want to say how glad I am to be here today. I want to introduce a couple of the peo-

ple who came with me: the Secretary of State Warren Christopher; your Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin; I think you know General Luck. And I thank you already for the welcome to me and my wife, the First Lady.

I see some of the young women soldiers

jumping up and down here in the back. We'll do that better—that's good.

I want to say to all of you, it is a great privilege for me to be here on the frontier of freedom with the warriors of the 2d Infantry Division. You are a very critical part of the finest Armed Forces the world has ever seen.

I'm sorry to be a little late, but I think you all know that because of the rains we couldn't take the helicopters today, and we drove to the DMZ.

Audience members. Woo! Woo! Woo!

The President. It was the first opportunity I had ever had to be along the DMZ. And I understand that I was in a more forward position than any President had been before. When I stood on the Bridge of No Return and looked over with my binoculars at those young North Korean soldiers, I thought to myself, I wish they were free to walk across this bridge and be with us in peace and freedom. And because of you, someday they will be, because of you.

For 40 years American soldiers like you have stood shoulder to shoulder with our Korean allies, providing South Korea with security against attack and the opportunity to flourish first as a great economy and now as a great democracy. I want every one of you to know whatever you do here, if you carry a rifle or drive a truck or repair a helicopter, whatever you do, your work is vital. And I admire your service, and believe it or not, so do millions of Americans you will never see or meet who do not know your names and may not even know exactly what you do. All of them know they live a little freer and a little better because of you and your sacrifice and your service.

All of you know that this is a challenging time to be in the military. Because the cold war has ended, some people think the threats to our country have ended, but you know better. You know that there is a reduced need for certain missions and forces around the world, but many threats continue.

Just a few weeks ago I ordered an attack on Baghdad, and you know why: because we concluded that Iraq had staged a plot to assassinate former President Bush while he was in Kuwait. And they were under the illusion that we treat our political leaders like they treat theirs. This is America. We honor everybody who has served this country, and we stick together. But when I gave that order, I did it with the confidence that we had the best mili-

tary in the world, equipped with the finest technology in history. And after that action was over, I felt more strongly than ever before that we must continue to have the best military in the world and the finest technology in the world.

For 6 years now, force levels have been lowered, budgets have been reduced, bases have been closed. These changes are unsettling and difficult, but I tell you that still we must maintain our readiness and we must make these cut-backs gradually and with a real feeling for the men and women who have won the cold war and deserve their country's best efforts to help them maintain successful lives.

And even in this time of transition, we must remember that we have to show foresight and caution in reducing our defenses. North Korea's stubborn refusal in recent months to fully comply with the requirements of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Agreement is the most urgent example of this. And in this new round of military cuts, I know that you all noticed no cuts were made in troop levels in Korea or Japan, and we beefed up our naval presence in the Pacific because that is what the national security requires.

You know, too many times in the past, in the absence of an overpowering threat, our country has forgotten just how badly we need people like you, with the morale and energy and vigor and determination that you're all demonstrating today. In 1945, before any of you were born, we won the Second World War. And just 5 short years later, we were involved in another conflict here in Korea. But by then we had diminished our strength so much that we entered the conflict inadequately prepared, without enough equipment or training, without enough strength. We must not ever make that mistake again.

So I say to you that, while over the next few years we will continue to reduce defense expenditures where appropriate and acknowledge that in many cases that may be desirable, there is clearly a line below which we cannot go. Our Armed Forces must still be able to fight and win on a moment's notice.

Let me make this last point: To do that, of course, we have to provide you with the most sophisticated precision-guided weapons we can. To do that, of course, we have to provide you with all the support we can. But in the end, you will make the difference: your discipline, your character, your will to win, your love for

your country, your ability to get up day-in and day-out and feel the way you are manifesting your feelings for your country and your duty today. That is America's winning edge, and that is what we must never lose.

Let me say in closing, I know that what you do is difficult and sometimes dangerous and often very lonely. You're a long way from home. When I was up on the DMZ, I met three people from my home State, a long way from home. You, too? And I want all of you to know that your demonstration of your professionalism and your dedication means that you and America really are second to none. What I want you

also to know is that I can see from my perspective sometimes something you may not be able to see, and that is, these pictures of you here saying what you're saying, doing what you're doing, being who you are, give great pause to the enemies of freedom and great heart to our allies and to all the American people.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:10 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. John Abrams, USA, commanding general, 2d Infantry Division, Camp Casey, and Gen. Gary E. Luck, USA, commander in chief, U.S. Forces, Korea.

Remarks at the U.S.S. *Arizona* Memorial in Honolulu, Hawaii *July 11, 1993*

Admiral Larson, ladies and gentlemen, it's a great honor for me to be here, not for the first time but for the first time as President, to honor the memory and the service of those who were killed 52 years ago on a Sunday morning like this in the service of their country. During December of 1941, Americans throughout our Nation were going about their business aware that much of the rest of the world was already embroiled in a conflict but hopeful that America would not be forced into it, that somehow by standing apart we might keep America's shores and our sons and daughters safe from the strife that had then engulfed much of the rest of the world.

Much has changed since that fateful Sunday morning in 1941. The United States no longer faces the threat of an expansionist Germany or Japan. Indeed, I have just met with the leaders of those two nations and four others in an attempt to increase the prosperity and opportunity of all the peoples who live within our nations. The expansionist Soviet Union, which sprung up after the Great War, was dismantled in the failure of communism in the last few years. And at this same meeting in Tokyo, the new democratically elected President of Russia, Boris Yeltsin, came and talked to us about how together we might build a brighter and freer and more prosperous future for his people.

Our closest friends now are those with whom we fought a half a century ago. And yet, it

is still as clear now as it was then that the United States cannot disengage from the world. To be economically and physically secure, we must continue to be strong. In visits to Japan and to Korea I have reaffirmed the commitment of the United States to the security of our allies and friends in the Pacific, beginning with a continuing military presence made possible by the men and women who serve our Nation here at Pearl Harbor and throughout the region. As we honor those who gave their lives a half century ago, let us also honor those who guard our security today.

I had breakfast with some of the young men and women of the Pacific Command this morning. And Admiral, I thank you very much for that opportunity. I was profoundly impressed by their energy, their discipline, their knowledge, their commitment, their willingness to do their jobs. I met with other members of our Armed Forces in Korea yesterday, including in the DMZ, where I was able to take the most forward position that any American President has ever enjoyed, standing on the Bridge of No Return about 10 yards from the dividing line which still separates us from what is perhaps the most anachronistic Communist regime remaining in the world.

I believe more strongly than ever before that the world has never had a better fighting force than the men and women who serve in the military service of our country. We are all in